

REMARKS

In view of the above amendments and the following remarks, reconsideration of the rejections contained in the Office Action of February 10, 2004, is respectfully requested.

In the previous Amendment filed November 20, 2003, original claims 1-35 were cancelled and new claims 36-55 were submitted. In the outstanding Office Action, the Examiner rejected independent claim 36 and dependent claims 39 and 40 as being anticipated by the Creixell reference (USP 4,951,791). However, the Examiner also indicated that claims 50-55 are allowable, and that dependent claims 37, 38, and 41-49 would be allowable "if rewritten to overcome the rejection(s) under 35 USC § 112 set forth in this Office Action" and to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. In view of the above, the claims have now been amended as explained below.

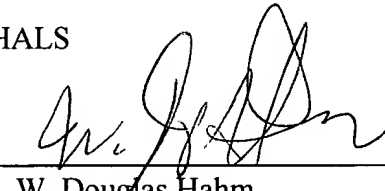
As an initial matter, there were no formal rejections under 35 USC § 112 set forth in the outstanding Office Action. Therefore, it appears that the Examiner's statement of allowable subject matter at the bottom of page 2 of the Office Action was slightly incorrect, and that the Examiner intended to state that the subject dependent claims would be allowable if rewritten to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Consequently, original independent claim 36 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of allowable dependent claim 37, and allowable dependent claim 41 has been amended so as to be placed in independent form including all of the subject matter of original base independent claim 36. In addition, dependent claim 37 has now been cancelled, and dependent claim 38 has been amended so that it now depends directly from amended independent claim 36. In view of these amendments, and in view of the Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter in the outstanding Office Action, it is respectfully submitted that the claims are now in condition for allowance.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is submitted that the present application is now in condition for allowance. However, if the Examiner should have any comments or suggestions to help speed the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is requested to contact the Applicant's undersigned representative.

Respectfully submitted,

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